



LEGISLATIVE ISSUES FOR 2003

1/8/03

1. Aviation Grant Program: The capital infrastructure needs of Florida's airports are funded through the public transportation set-aside of the Transportation Trust Fund (estimated to be nearly \$90 million for airports in 2003) to match federal funds from the federal government and local funds. To keep pace with demand, FDOT estimates that airports will require over \$9.6 billion in capital improvement investments by 2010. Florida's 19 commercial and 87 general aviation airports depend on the Aviation Grants program to keep air service in their communities viable.

RECOMMENDATION: The Florida Airports Council strongly opposes any effort that reduces the \$89 million scheduled for the Aviation Work Program in 2003.

2. Airport Bonds for Security: After the events of September 11, 2001, Congress mandated extensive new security requirements at all commercial airports; however, funding for this multi-billion dollar security program has not been appropriated. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) indicates that federal funds will not be adequate to meet the needs of the nation's airports without state and local funds. Funds appropriated from the current Aviation Grant Program will be inadequate to meet the expected \$500 million security needs of Florida's commercial airports. To meet the national requirements for safety and security, Florida airports need an additional \$250 million.

RECOMMENDATION: The Florida Airports Council seeks legislative authority to bond at least \$20 million per year for at least a twenty (20) year period to fund unprecedented security, safety, capacity, and economic development projects not currently included in the Florida Department of Transportation's Aviation Grant Program. One possible source of funding is from the Transportation Outreach Program (TOP). Should the State Legislature concur with this source of funding, Florida airports will agree to not be eligible for additional funding under that program at its current authorized level.

3. Airport Terminal Smoking Regulations: In the last election, the voters passed a Constitutional Amendment to prohibit smoking in public buildings and restaurants. Federal law prohibits smoking on aircraft, and because of increased security requirements, passengers cannot easily exit terminal buildings to smoke; additional flexibility is needed to accommodate smokers in airport terminals.

RECOMMENDATION: The Florida Airports Council proposes that any new bill enacted to regulate smoking in public buildings allows for flexibility within airport terminals.

4. Fire Code Revisions: On January 1, 2002, the State of Florida adopted a new fire code that includes the requirement for a five minute 'firewall' between aircraft loading bridges and the aircraft. Recent airport inspections by local Fire Marshals indicate the design of existing aircraft loading bridges will not provide the requisite five minute separation. Because fuselages differ by aircraft, operational requirements of airlines differ, and the requirement is not consistently applied throughout the country and state, relief is sought by exempting aircraft loading bridges from this part of the NFPA code.

RECOMMENDATION: Amend state fire code to make passenger loading bridges exempt from that portion of Section 4.1 of the State adopted NFPA 415, 1997 edition, which requires a safe means of egress from the aircraft for a period of five minutes under fire exposure conditions equivalent to a free burning jet fuel spill fire.

5. Flight Training: Flight training generates over \$1 billion annually for Florida's economy. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11/01, the Florida Legislature considered several bills which would have placed additional regulatory burdens on Florida flight schools.

RECOMMENDATION: The Florida Airports Council opposes any state regulation on flight schools that would give other states' flight schools an economic advantage over Florida. Regulation of such schools should continue to be the responsibility of the federal government.

For additional information on these items contact Bill Johnson, Executive Director, Florida Airports Council
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